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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EUN](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: LITHUANIA FOCUSED ON BELARUS, RUSSIA AND UKRAINE  
AT GAERC

REF: VILNIUS 602

Classified By: DCM Damian R. Leader for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. The head of MFA's Common Foreign and Security Policy Division, Egidius Navikas said Foreign Minister Usackas will focus on Belarus, Russia and Ukraine at the next GAERC meeting. Usackas will stress that the EU should monitor and assign target dates for Belarus to implement benchmark conditions including releasing political prisoners, allowing free media, registering NGOs and reforming the electoral code. Regarding Russia, Navikas said that Usackas will endorse constructive but critical engagement at the EU level. The FM will also speak on Ukraine highlighting gas transit and energy issues; the economic situation and domestic politics; Ukraine's progress on its association agreement and the longer term goal of a visa free regime.

¶2. (C) Navikas said that the EU Council Conclusions on Belarus (reftel) are already approved and the discussion at GAERC will be political statements rather than negotiations. Usackas will stress that the EU should monitor and assign target dates for Belarus to implement benchmark conditions including releasing political prisoners, allowing free media, registering NGOs and reforming the electoral code. Navikas acknowledged that target dates may be viewed as "wishful thinking" but reasoned that deadlines could introduce pressure to implement change in a timely manner. He also said that Usackas supports visa facilitation with Belarus.

¶3. (C) Navikas said that EU Foreign Ministers will use the GAERC discussion to prepare for the EU-Russia summit on November 18. Usackas will endorse constructive but critical engagement with Russia at the EU level. Navikas said that Usackas will focus on Russia's interpretation of history and its approach to common neighbors. Further to recent remarks by President Medvedev including the "Go Russia" speech, Usackas wants the EU to help the Russian people to understand their identity which is separate from the Soviet Union and separate from Stalin. Navikas said that Usackas will also call on the EU to encourage Russia to keep international commitments including the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT) and WTO commitments.

¶4. (C) Navikas said that the FM will also speak on Ukraine. He said that gas transit and energy issues could become a problem and we should do everything possible to avoid a repeat scenario of last winter's gas prices in Ukraine. Regarding Ukraine's economic and domestic political situations, Navikas said that the EU should mentor Ukraine especially with the Presidential elections in January. Usackas will encourage the EU to recognize the substantial progress that Ukraine has made on its' association agreement. Navikas explained that Ukraine wants the EU to recognize their EU identity and perspective. Finally, as a long term goal, Navikas said that the EU should provide Ukraine with benchmarks to achieve a visa-free regime.

¶5. (C) Aside from neighborhood issues Navikas said that

Usackas will contribute to the discussion on Afghanistan development and how development policies should support the democratization process. He said that the FM will highlight the GOL's efforts to promote democracy at its PRT in Ghor. The FM will also mention the Community of Democracies, which Lithuania now chairs, and its possible role in Afghanistan issues.

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